
A Catholic Primer

Being a Short Explanation of the Catholic

By CANON J. O. COOP



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A CATHOLIC PRIMER

*Being a Short Explanation
of the Catholic Faith*

BY

J. O. COOP, D.S.O., M.A.

Vicar of S. Margaret's, Anfield; Hon. Canon of Liverpool

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J. O. COOP, D.S.O., M.A.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.

LONDON: 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W. 1

OXFORD: 9 High Street

MILWAUKEE, U.S.A.: The Morehouse Publishing Co.

1921

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INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is *not* intended to be used as a Catechism. It is merely an attempt to provide a short, simple, and definite explanation of the Catholic Faith, based upon the Apostles' Creed, and capable of being understood by children and by those persons of riper years who may require some such simple instruction in the Faith.

I am fully conscious of the many shortcomings which may be discovered in the pages which follow, but I hope, nevertheless, that the primer may be found to be of service by those for whom it has been written.

I am grateful to the Rev. S. R. P. Mouldsdale, B.D., Principal of S. Chad's College, Durham, and to the Rev. V. Spencer Ellis for valuable suggestions and for useful criticism.

J. O. COOP.

S. MARGARET'S, ANFIELD,
LIVERPOOL.

March, 1921.



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"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."—S. LUKE x. 21.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."
—S. MARK x. 15.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—S. MATT. xviii. 3, 4.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Q. Who is God ?

A. God is the Creator of all things.

Q. What is God like ?

A. God is a Spirit. No man hath seen God at any time. No one knows what He is like.

Q. Where is God ?

A. God is everywhere. His home is in heaven, but He dwells in the hearts of men.

Q. Where is heaven ?

A. No one knows. God has not revealed it. But heaven is where God is.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ ?

A. Jesus Christ is God's only-begotten Son.

Q. When was He begotten ?

A. He was begotten before all things were made : that is, before there was any world.

Q. Where did He live ?

A. He lived with God, His Father, and the angels in heaven.

Q. What are the angels ?

A. The angels are God's messengers. They serve Him and worship Him in heaven, and they come and bring messages from God to us.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ leave heaven ?

A. Because God loved the world so much. He made it so beautiful, but things were going all wrong. So He sent His Son into the world to put things right again.

Q. But why had He to send His Son ?

A. Because no one else would do. He had to send His Son.

Q. Why didn't He send the angels ?

A. He did send them often. But men wouldn't listen to the angels, so at last He had to send His Son. There was no one else.

Q. What was wrong with the world ?

A. The world was suffering from a disease called Sin. It was a very infectious disease, and it was spreading very rapidly. God knew that if something was not done all mankind would be lost. He was very sorry, because He loved the world so much. He must have loved it very much, or He wouldn't have sent His only Son to save it. He knew His Son wanted to go, so He let Him go.

Q. Why did He let Him go ?

A. Because : " There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."

Q. But why was it necessary for Jesus to come and be Man ?

A. Because only Man could talk to men. Suppose the birds, for instance, were all suffering from a mortal disease, and suppose that you knew that if

the disease were not stamped out the whole bird race would die. And suppose that you knew of a very simple remedy that would cure them all if you could only tell them about it—it wouldn't be any good.

Q. Why?

A. Because you couldn't tell them. You couldn't speak their language. The only way would be to become a bird yourself and speak the bird language. Then you could tell them. They could please themselves whether they listened to you or not; but, anyhow, you could tell them. You could give them the chance. That is why Jesus Christ had to become Man.

Q. In order that He could speak man's language?

A. Yes. He was born just as any other little child is born. He had no earthly father; God was His Father. But He had an earthly Mother, and she was very poor. He grew up with poor men. Then when He became old enough and knew all about men, and men knew all about Him, He began to tell them how to cure themselves from their disease. Some of them tried His remedy and they were cured. Others laughed at Him and wouldn't try. But, at least, they had heard about the remedy. They wouldn't have heard if Jesus hadn't become Man and told them. Had He spoken to them in God's language they wouldn't have understood.

Q. Then was Jesus Christ two persons—God and Man?

A. No; He was only one Person—God. But after He was made man He had two natures—the Nature of God and the nature of man.

Q. Who was the Mother of Jesus Christ ?

A. The Blessed Virgin Mary. She was just a young Hebrew girl who was betrothed to a man much older than herself. His name was Joseph. But one day, before they were married, one of God's messengers—the angel called Gabriel—came and told her that she was to become the mother of the Messiah.

Q. Who was the Messiah ?

A. Jesus was. The Jews had long been looking for the Messiah to come, so when the angel told Mary she was to be His Mother she was very glad. But of course she thought He was going to be a splendid prince, not just a poor peasant. She didn't understand.

Q. Where was Jesus born ?

A. At Bethlehem. He wouldn't have been but for a curious happening, because Mary and Joseph lived at Nazareth, a little town far away in the north of Galilee. But Caesar Augustus, just a little time before Jesus was born, ordered a census to be taken, and so everybody had to go to the place where they were born, in order to be registered.

Q. Was Mary born in Bethlehem ?

A. Yes. So, of course, although it was so near the time when her child was to be born, she had to go there. It was a long and a hard journey, but she went. And when she got to Bethlehem her Baby was born. All the rooms in the village were full, so the poor mother had just to make her bed in the yard of the inn where the asses and the camels were tethered, and Jesus was born there.

Q. What a pity !

A. No, it wasn't a pity ; it was wonderful ! You see, the old prophets had always said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and that His Mother would be a virgin. Now if it hadn't been for the census Jesus would have been born in Nazareth, and people would never have believed in Him. Besides, the Wise Men would never have found Him.

Q. Who were the Wise Men ?

A. They were some very learned men who lived far away in the East. They had made a great study of the stars, and they had learned that when a certain star was seen in a certain place it would mean that the Redeemer of the world was born. Well, men had been looking for this star for years, and then one evening these Wise Men saw it, and they packed up at once and went off on a long, long journey, till at last they came to Jerusalem. Then they went to the king—Herod his name was—and asked him what was the name of the village where the prophets had said the promised Redeemer was to be born.

Q. And what did Herod say ?

A. He didn't know. But he called up his learned men and asked them, and they told him Bethlehem was the village.

Q. What happened then ?

A. Well, the Wise Men immediately set off to Bethlehem. But before they went Herod requested them, if they found the Child, to come back to Jerusalem and tell him where He was. He pretended he wanted to go to worship Him,

but really he wanted to know so that he could have Him killed.

Q. And did the Wise Men find Jesus ?

A. Yes. I expect they were surprised when they found Him in the manger in the inn yard. But though He looked so poor they knelt and worshipped Him. The people who watched them must have thought them mad. Then they opened their baggage and gave Him—the little Baby—the presents they had brought : gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Q. Then did they go and tell Herod ?

A. No ; they packed up and went home another way.

Q. Wasn't Herod angry ?

A. Very. But he determined to kill Jesus all the same, and to make certain he ordered that every baby of two years old and under was to be killed.

Q. Was Jesus killed ?

A. No. Joseph had a dream. He was told in it what Herod was going to do, and he was told to take the Mother and her Baby and to escape to Egypt at once.

Q. Did he go ?

A. Yes. Thanks to the Wise Men. You see he was a very poor man, and he would have had no money for the journey. It was a very long journey and very expensive.

Q. How did he get the money ?

A. The gold that the Wise Men gave him as a present for Jesus. Wasn't it wonderful ? I am sure Joseph thought so.

Q. Was Jesus long in Egypt ?

A. He was there till Joseph heard that Herod was dead. Then the family came back to their home at Nazareth, where they lived till Jesus was thirty years old. Jesus helped Joseph, who was a carpenter, till He grew up. They were all very poor.

Q. Did the people of Nazareth know who Jesus was ?

A. No. Only His Mother, Mary, knew. She didn't tell anybody. No one would have believed her if she had. Jesus was just like any other man ; except that He never did anything wrong. That was the only difference.

Q. When did Jesus stop working as a carpenter ?

A. When He was thirty years old. Then He began to preach and to teach, and sometimes He performed miracles.

Q. What is a miracle ?

A. Something that is wonderful, and beyond the powers of nature. To turn water into wine, or to raise a person from the dead, is a miracle.

Q. Weren't the people surprised when He performed miracles ?

A. Yes. But they didn't understand. His disciples even didn't understand.

Q. Who were His disciples ?

A. Some men who liked Him and believed Him to be a very good man. They were just poor men, but they gave up their work and joined Him.

Q. Did they know who He was ?

A. No. They never knew till after He was dead. They thought He was going to be a great man,

perhaps a king, but they never knew really who He was till long after.

Q. Had He many disciples ?

A. Yes, many. But He picked out twelve of them who were called "Apostles," and they were His special companions all the time. They always went with Him. He loved them and they loved Him.

Q. What did He preach about ?

A. Chiefly about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven was a great Society that He came into the world to found. He was always talking about it.

Q. Did He found the Society ?

A. Yes. It is called "The Holy Catholic Church." The kingdom of heaven that Jesus talked about so much is the same as what we call the Holy Catholic Church.

Q. Did He perform many miracles ?

A. Yes, a great many. He was so sorry for people. But He never performed any just for the sake of showing off. He always told the people He healed not to talk about it, but just to thank God.

Q. Which was the greatest miracle ?

A. The loaves and fishes. You must read all about that in the Bible. Jesus miraculously fed five thousand men and a very large number of women and children. But that was not the important thing—it was what came after it.

Q. Why ? What did come after it ?

A. Well, after the miracle the disciples and everybody who was there began to talk of it, and then

Jesus began to tell them mysterious things, about the Bread of Life, and about eating His Body, and drinking His Blood, and in the end He made this tremendous assertion : " Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you."

Q. And what did they say ?

A. Most of them said He was mad. Even many of His disciples turned away and left Him. They thought He must be mad to talk so. But the twelve Apostles remained faithful. Jesus asked them if they were going to leave Him too, because of what He had said, but they said they were not. They were going to remain faithful. I expect they were puzzled all the same. He told them a year afterwards, the night before His death, that He had many things that He wanted to tell them, but that they could not understand them if He did, and that He would tell them everything one day.

Q. And did He ?

A. Yes.

Q. When ?

A. Well, He explained this particular "hard saying" the night before He died. But you will hear all about that later. The other things He told them afterwards, when He was risen from the dead.

Q. How long was Jesus preaching and healing ?

A. About three years.

Q. Weren't the people very glad ?

A. Some were, the poor people, and the bad people especially. The rulers and the rich people didn't like Him.

Q. Why?

A. Because they said He was too friendly with the bad people, and because He used to rebuke the people who thought themselves good.

Q. But why was Jesus friendly with the bad people?

A. Because He wanted to help them and to make them good. He wanted to cure them of the disease I told you about.

Q. Was it the bad people who had the disease of sin?

A. Yes. But the others had it too. The difference was that some of the bad people *knew* they had got the disease. The other people had it but they didn't know, or they wouldn't own that they had it; so, of course, Jesus couldn't help them till they did. It is only when you know that you are bad, and want to be cured, that Jesus can help you.

Q. And were the rulers and those people unkind to Him?

A. Very. They did all they could against Him, and spread all sorts of wicked stories against Him, and at last they got Him arrested.

Q. How?

A. They said He was committing blasphemy, and also that He was trying to turn the people against the government. So they got the high priest to send the Temple guard to arrest Him.

Q. And did he send them?

A. Yes. Jesus knew all about it. He could have escaped if He had wanted to. He often used to tell His disciples that He was going to be killed, but

they never understood. However, on that Thursday night, when He knew that He would die the next day, He had a long talk with them, and He told them many things.

Q. Where was that?

A. In Jerusalem. He and His disciples had borrowed a room so that they could eat the Pass-over. It was after supper that He told them.

Q. What did He say?

A. Well, first He told them that there was a traitor amongst them, and that this man was going to betray Him that very night to the chief priests and scribes.

Q. Who was the traitor?

A. His name was Judas Iscariot. The moment Jesus spoke about the traitor he left the room. He knew that Jesus knew what he was going to do. But before he went Jesus told the disciples a wonderful thing.

Q. What was that?

A. Well, you remember I told you that after the miracle of the loaves and fishes very many people turned away from Him?

Q. Yes. Because He said they would have to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood.

A. And you remember that He promised to explain it all to His Apostles some day?

Q. Yes. Was this the time when He explained it?

A. Yes. After supper, and before Judas had gone out, He reminded them of the miracle a year ago,

and of His promise to explain what He meant by eating His Body and drinking His Blood. Then He took some of the Passover bread and blessed it, and broke it, and said, "This is My Body"; and after that He took the cup, which contained a mixture of wine and water, and blessed that, and said, "This is My Blood." Then He gave them this Sacrament of His Body and His Blood, and they all solemnly partook of it together.

Q. Is that why it is called the Holy Communion?

A. Yes. They all ate and drank in communion with each other, and with Him. But I will tell you more about that later.

Q. What happened then?

A. He began to talk to them about His kingdom again, and they could see He was very sad. Then He told them that before the night was out they would all run away and leave Him.

Q. What did they say to that?

A. Oh, they were very angry that He could think so ill of them. One of them, Peter, who, with the two brothers James and John, was one of His favourite disciples, was especially angry, and said he would die with Jesus rather than deny Him or leave Him.

Q. What did Jesus say?

A. He told Peter that before cock-crow next morning he would three times have denied that he ever knew Him.

Q. What did Peter say to that?

A. He said it wasn't true, that he would never do any such thing. They all said the same.

Q. What happened then ?

A. Jesus led them out of the room and through the city, and up the slope on the other side of the valley to a garden called Gethsemane. Then He took Peter and James and John with Him inside the garden, and told them to watch for the soldiers coming, while He went further into the garden to pray.

Q. What did He want to pray for ?

A. For strength. He didn't want to die. He was a man just like you and me, and He didn't want to die. He told God so. He said, "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me." The agony of it, of what lay before Him, was so great that His sweat was as drops of blood. But He was willing to die. He said so: "Nevertheless not *My* will, but *Thine* be done." That teaches all of us a lesson.

Q. What is that ?

A. If Jesus found it hard to do His Father's will, you and I must not expect to find it easy. If Jesus even had to pray for strength to enable Him to do God's will, you and I must expect to have to do the same. And just as God sent an angel to strengthen Jesus to perform His will, so He will send an angel to strengthen you and me.

Q. What were the three disciples doing at this time ?

A. They were fast asleep. It was not surprising, because they had all had a very tiring week. Jesus went to them twice, but they couldn't keep awake. Then at last He heard voices and knew the soldiers and the mob were coming, so He woke them up and warned them to be off.

Q. Did they go ?

A. Yes. But Peter stayed.

Q. So he wasn't a coward.

A. No; when the mob came he immediately rushed at them and snatched a sword from one of the soldiers and began to lay about him. He struck at the high priest's servant and cut his ear off. Jesus had to tell him to stop and to sheathe his sword, or he would certainly have been killed. He was a very brave man.

Q. So he didn't deny Him after all ?

A. Yes, he did. You see, after Judas had kissed Jesus—

Q. But why did he kiss Him ?

A. That was the sign he had agreed upon to show them which was Jesus. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He." You see, Jesus just looked like anybody else.

Q. Well, what happened then ?

A. The soldiers came and took Jesus, and then they all set off back to Jerusalem, and they took Jesus to the high priest's palace. Peter went with them. He wanted to see what was going to happen.

Q. So Peter was a brave man ?

A. Yes; but brave men sometimes do cowardly things.

Q. Did Peter do a cowardly thing ?

A. Yes.

Q. When ?

A. When he stood by the fire and warmed himself. The soldiers had made a fire in the vestibule

of the palace because it was a cold night, and Peter stood there with them warming himself. While he stood there a girl came up and asked him if he wasn't one of Jesus's disciples.

Q. What did he say?

A. He said he wasn't. He said he didn't know Him.

Q. Whatever made him say that?

A. The fire. He was nice and warm, and he thought of his own personal comfort and the joys of life, and he forgot his Master and the cause. If the girl had asked him that question an hour before, when he was out in the cold, he would have answered very differently.

Q. Is that why the fire was mentioned?

A. Yes. Three of the four evangelists mentioned it. That fire was Peter's downfall. If he hadn't stood there warming himself he wouldn't have denied his Master. But as the heat went in his manliness went out, and he did what he despised himself for ever afterwards. It is a warning to you and me. It isn't when we are in the cold and the rough that the devil tempts us most, it is when we are sitting by the fire warming ourselves: when we have plenty to eat and drink, and plenty of money and plenty of time to spend it—that is when we are most tempted to deny our Lord.

Q. How many times did Peter deny Jesus?

A. Three times. At the third time Jesus was led out, and He looked at Peter as He passed, and just at that moment a cock crew. Then Peter remembered and realized what he had done, and he burst into tears.

Q. What happened to Jesus then?

A. He was sentenced to death, and next day He was crucified. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, wanted to let Him off, but the Jews wouldn't agree. They threatened to report him to Caesar if he didn't condemn Him, and as Pilate had been in trouble with Caesar once before he gave way.

Q. Where was Jesus crucified?

A. On a hill called Calvary, just outside Jerusalem. He was flogged first with a scourge, then to mock Him because He had talked so much about His kingdom the Jews put a scarlet robe, such as kings wear, upon Him, and a crown made of thorns upon His head.

Q. How did they crucify Him?

A. They laid Him upon a cross of wood, and hammered nails through His hands and His feet. Then they lifted the Cross into a socket, and left it standing upright, as you have seen in the pictures.

Q. Didn't it hurt Him very much?

A. Very much. Crucifixion is a dreadful death; sometimes it took three days before the crucified died. But Jesus was not so long. He was dead in six hours.

Q. Why did He die so quickly?

A. Because His heart burst. He died of a broken heart. Never forget that. Many other people, many poor soldiers in the war, many martyrs suffered much more bodily pain than Jesus did. But bodily pain is not so bad as mental anguish. Jesus died of a broken heart. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." His disciples had all run away and left Him. On Him was laid the sins of

the whole world, and sin to Him was a dreadful thing. He had to bear it all alone. His agony was so dreadful that God blotted it out so that men could not see it. There was darkness for three whole hours until He died.

Q. Why did God let Him die?

A. There was no other way. He had to die so that you and I might live.

Q. But wasn't it cruel of God?

A. No. It hurt Jesus very much to die, but it hurt His Father more to let Him die. Just ask your father or your mother if they wouldn't rather suffer pain themselves than stand by and see you suffer. Of course they would. God *must* have loved the world very much indeed to suffer like that. You see He could have stopped it all. Your father and mother couldn't, however much they wished, if it was you who were suffering. But God could have stopped it; it must have cost Him very much not to have done it. I don't think we realize what it cost Him. He must have *loved* the world to endure all that.

Q. Were the Jews surprised that Jesus died so soon?

A. Yes, very much. To make sure that He was dead a soldier thrust a spear into His side, and there came out blood and water, which showed that He was dead, and that He had died of a broken heart. There was no doubt that He was dead.

Q. What happened then?

A. Well, ordinarily His body would have been taken down from the Cross and flung into the valley of Hinnom. But a rich man named Joseph, of

Arimathea, asked Pilate to let him bury Jesus in his new tomb, and Pilate, who was very sorry about the whole business, gave him leave.

Q. Were the Jews angry ?

A. Very. They went to Pilate and asked for a guard, because they said His disciples might come and steal Him away and pretend that He had risen from the dead. They needn't have been anxious really, because His disciples were much too frightened to do anything of the sort. However, Pilate let them have a guard posted, and the tomb was all sealed up.

Q. For how long ?

A. Till the Sunday morning, then it was found empty.

Q. How was that ?

A. Some of the women, Mary Magdalene and others, had gone very early in the morning to the tomb and found the stone rolled away from it, and a messenger from God, an angel, told them to go and tell the disciples that He was risen.

Q. Did they believe it ?

A. I don't think so really. But they went to tell the disciples, and as they were going Jesus met them. Then they believed. He told them to go off at once to tell the disciples, and Peter, that He was risen.

Q. Why did He say "and Peter" ?

A. Because He knew how sorry Peter was feeling, and how ashamed he was. It was His way of letting Peter know He had forgiven him. Our dear Lord was always thoughtful. He knew that when the women brought the message and said "and Peter," Peter would be glad and would understand,

Q. Did he ?

A. Yes. The moment the disciples received the message Peter and John rushed off at once to see if it was true. John was younger than Peter, and he could run faster, so he got there first. He looked in, and when he saw the linen clothes lying there he probably thought Jesus was still there ; anyhow, he didn't go inside.

Q. Did Peter ?

A. Yes; Peter went in. He wanted to make certain. He had to stoop to get in—you always have to stoop if you want to see the Risen Jesus—and then he found that the women's message was true and the Body was gone.

Q. Then what did they do ?

A. They went straight back and told the disciples. But, of course, they didn't believe them ; naturally they wouldn't. However, that same night, when they were sitting together, very frightened of the Jews, in the little room where they had eaten the Last Supper together, Jesus came in : and then, of course, they couldn't help believing.

Q. But weren't they frightened ?

A. Yes ; but they soon got over that. And after that for forty days Jesus often appeared to them and talked to them.

Q. What about ?

A. About His kingdom ; the Society He had come to found. You remember how I told you that, on the night before He was crucified, He told them that He had many things to tell them, but that they could not understand them then even if He told them.

Q. Yes ?

A. And He promised that one day He would show them all things clearly.

Q. Yes ?

A. Well, He began to tell them now. He explained Who He was ; why He had come into the world ; why He had to die ; what He was going to do now that He was risen again ; and He told them all about the Society.

Q. What did He tell them about it ?

A. He told them all the rules ; all about Baptism, and the Holy Communion, and Confession, and Absolution, and Holy Orders, and the resurrection of the dead—everything that we believe now.

Q. How do you know that He told them ?

A. Because afterwards, although they were all scattered all over the world, they all taught the same things and did the same things. They taught and did just what we teach and do now. So He must have told them.

Q. Why were they scattered all over the world ?

A. Because He told them to go and preach the Gospel—which means tell the good news—to every creature. So they had to scatter.

Q. When was that ?

A. After His Ascension ; after the Day of Pentecost.

Q. What was His Ascension ?

A. His going back home again, to heaven. One Thursday, exactly forty days after His Resurrection, He called them together, and gave them their final instructions ; and then He told them He was going to leave them, that He was going back to His Father.

Q. Weren't they sorry ?

A. Not so sorry as when He spoke to them before His crucifixion ; you see they understood everything now. Besides, they were anxious to be off themselves ; to go out into the world and tell everybody the news and get the Society going. He had to keep telling them that they must wait for something else.

Q. What was that ?

A. The Holy Ghost. They had the will, but they had not the power. It was from the Holy Ghost that they had to receive that.

Q. Who is the Holy Ghost ?

A. The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He was God just as Jesus Christ was God. He is the Lord and Giver of life. No one can do anything for God except through the power of the Holy Ghost. So our Lord told them they must wait for the Holy Ghost before they set out upon their mission, because everything depended upon Him.

Q. And did they wait ?

A. Yes. They were in a hurry to be off, but they waited. Well, just before Jesus finally left them He said two things of very great importance. First, He told them that He gave them power to forgive sins on His behalf ; and then He told them that He would be with them always—even unto the end of the world.

Q. What did He mean by that ?

A. He meant in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. He is always with us then, as near to us

as He was to His disciples when He was on earth, as near to us as He will be on the Day of Judgement.

Q. What is the Day of Judgement ?

A. The day when God will judge us all. But I will tell you of that later.

Q. When did Jesus go back to heaven ?

A. On the Thursday, forty days after Easter Day. Just after He had finished speaking, after He had made that splendid promise that He would be with His disciples unto the end of the world, He disappeared in a cloud, and His disciples never saw Him again in this world.

Q. Is Jesus still Man ?

A. Yes. At the Ascension He took our human nature into heaven.

Q. What is He doing in heaven now ?

A. Helping us poor sinners just as He did on earth. Pleading for us, and reminding His Father of His promise to forgive us *anything* for His sake—for what He had done for us.

Q. And does God really forgive anything, however bad it is ?

A. Yes. Nothing, no one, is ever too bad for God to forgive.

Q. What did the disciples do after Jesus left them ?

A. They waited for the Holy Ghost to come.

Q. And did He ?

A. Yes. Ten days after Jesus had ascended into heaven He came.

Q. Where were the disciples ?

A. In the little upper room again at Jerusalem. There was a great Jewish festival taking place, and Jerusalem was filled with people. While the disciples were sitting together they suddenly heard a sound like a rushing mighty wind, and cloven tongues like as of fire lighted upon them.

Q. Did they know that was the Holy Ghost ?

A. Yes ; because they suddenly found they were able to speak other languages than their own. They realized then why it was that Jesus said they must wait for the Holy Ghost before they set out to preach about the kingdom.

Q. Why was it ?

A. Well, don't you see they were all poor, ignorant men, and couldn't speak any other language except their own. So it would be no use for them to go out into the world to preach in other countries unless they knew the language. Suppose you went to France and couldn't speak French, you couldn't preach could you ? Now, suddenly the disciples found they had this new power, and they also knew that they were filled with the Spirit of God.

Q. How did they know ?

A. They found out at once. The desire to preach, to tell the news, came upon them, and they went out at once. Jerusalem at that time was full of foreign Jews from all parts of the world. Well, the Apostles found that they could speak to them in their own language, and they did so. These foreign Jews were amazed and said so, because the Apostles looked such very ordinary men, and not very many people could speak any other language than their own in those days.

Q. Why were there so many foreign Jews in Jerusalem at that time ?

A. Because of the weather. Of course the Passover was the most important feast, but Jews who lived a long way off couldn't always get to it because the weather at that time of the year was unsettled and often very bad. But at Pentecost, seven weeks later, the weather was lovely, and the sea calm, so Jews from everywhere could travel then. That is why there were always more people in Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast than for the Passover. It was very lucky, too, as it happened. Or, rather, it wasn't lucky, but it was arranged by God.

Q. How do you mean ?

A. Well, you see all these foreign Jews would be in Jerusalem and would hear the Gospel from the Apostles. Then, of course, when they went back after the feast to their different homes in foreign lands they would take the news with them. They would become missionaries, so to speak. There was another very important reason why these Jews from all over the world should hear the story about Jesus first in Jerusalem.

Q. What was that ?

A. Because they were on the spot and could make inquiries to find out if it was really true. Then when they went home they could tell their people that it wasn't just hearsay, but that they had made inquiries and had found out that it was true.

Q. Did many of them believe ?

A. Yes; three thousand were baptized almost immediately.

Q. What is "baptized" ?

A. Baptism is the ceremony by which people are admitted into the kingdom—the Holy Catholic Church. It is the only way; there is no other method. It was our Lord Who ordered it: He said "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Just before He ascended into heaven He told His Apostles to baptize all who believed and wanted to enter the Society—the Church.

Q. How are people baptized ?

A. Either by immersion—that is dipping them into water—or by having water poured over them, and at the same time the words "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," are said. Both the water and the words are necessary. Without either of them it is no Baptism.

Q. Cannot people be admitted into the Church without Baptism ?

A. No.

Q. Not even if they believed and loved our Lord ?

A. No. If they believed and loved our Lord they would do as He said.

Q. But suppose there was no clergyman there to baptize them ?

A. Then anybody else can do it. It isn't *necessary* to be baptized by a clergyman. It is wiser because there is no fear of his making a mistake by, for instance, not using the proper form of words, or not using water. But if water and the proper form of words are used, anybody can baptize a person.

Q. And is it just the same as if a priest baptized them ?

A. Just the same. They are members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven just as you are. They belong to the Society—the Holy Catholic Church.

Q. Then are Wesleyans, and Roman Catholics, and Congregationalists, and Baptists, and so on, members of the Holy Catholic Church ?

A. If they have been properly baptized, yes. Not otherwise.

Q. So is there only one Church ?

A. Only one. Our Lord only founded one. He knows only one.

Q. So it really doesn't matter what you are if you have been baptized ?

A. Oh yes, it does. You see, every society has its rules, and if you belong to the society you should keep its rules. If you don't keep the rules then you are cut off from the privileges of the society. That is only common sense. There are good members and bad members. Those who don't keep the rules are bad members.

Q. Who made the rules ?

A. The Apostles did, and those who came after them. But, of course, Jesus made the two important ones.

Q. What are the two important ones ?

A. The two Sacraments of the Gospel. First, that all who wanted to enter the Church must do so through the gate of Baptism ; and second, that having entered, they should regularly receive the Sacrament of the Holy Communion.

Q. What is a Sacrament ?

A. Something which has two parts : what you can see, and what you can't see. For instance, in Baptism what you can see is the water poured over a person's head ; what you can't see is the gift of the Holy Ghost which is given at the same time. But it is there all the same, though you cannot see it. After Baptism your body becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost."

Q. How do I know that ?

A. Because the Holy Ghost is always talking to you. Whenever you are going to do something you shouldn't He talks to you. The Holy Ghost is within you to "sanctify" you ; that is, to make you good. He is always trying to do that, and if you will listen to Him He will make you good. You can please yourself whether you listen or not, but He tells you all the same.

Q. Can anybody be baptized ?

A. Yes, if he loves Jesus and believes all about Him, and says he wants to be good, and to try and live like He did. He must promise that before he can be baptized, before he can be admitted to the kingdom.

Q. But I have been baptized and I never promised that.

A. No ; but your godparents did. If they hadn't you wouldn't have been allowed to join the Society. They did it for you.

Q. But was that right ?

A. Quite. They acted as your sureties.

Q. What is a surety ?

A. A person who promises something on behalf of somebody else. For instance, suppose I wanted to borrow £100 from Mr. X. He would say to me, "Yes, I will lend you £100 if you can get two sureties to guarantee that if you don't pay the money back they will." So I go to Mr. Y. and Mr. Z., and they promise because they are quite sure I will pay. They tell Mr. X. that they are willing to be my sureties, and so he lends me the money. That is what your godparents did ; they promised for you till you were old enough to promise for yourself.

Q. But how did they know that I would promise when I grew up ?

A. They didn't know, but were sure you would. Anyhow, they promised to see that you were taught all about Jesus and all about the Church, so that when you were old enough you could promise for yourself if you wanted to.

Q. When do I promise for myself ?

A. At your confirmation. As soon as you are old enough to learn you are taught all about Jesus and about the Church. You are told what your godparents had promised for you ; everything is carefully explained to you ; then, when you have been taught and when you have understood, you go to church to the service called "Confirmation." The bishop is there and many other people, generally godparents. The bishop asks you if you are willing to ratify, or confirm, what your godparents promised for you, and you say that you are. Then he solemnly lays his hands upon you, like the Apostles used to do, and administers the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is a very solemn service.

Q. Why does the bishop lay his hands upon me ?

A. That is the "outward and visible sign"—the thing you can see. The other part of the Sacrament—that which you cannot see—is the renewed gift of the Holy Ghost. But you know you have received the gift though you can't see it.

Q. How do I know ?

A. By faith. "According to your faith be it done unto you." Wait until your confirmation day, and then you will understand what I mean.

Q. Has there always been Confirmation ?

A. Always, from the very earliest days of the Church. Probably it was our Lord Who ordered it, after His Resurrection, when He was explaining things to His Apostles. But we are not told so.

Q. And do you say that Confirmation is a Sacrament ?

A. Yes. Altogether there are seven Sacraments ; but two—Baptism and the Holy Communion—are called the "Sacraments of the Gospel," because it is recorded in the Gospels that Jesus Himself ordered them. They are generally necessary to salvation—that means necessary to everybody.

Q. What are the other Sacraments ?

A. Penance, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, and Holy Unction, and (as I have told you) Confirmation.

Q. But isn't Confirmation necessary for everybody ?

A. Everybody ought to be confirmed, but there are cases when the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion is given to people who have not been

confirmed ; in the war, for instance, if a poor soldier who was just going into battle wanted very much to receive the Blessed Sacrament the priest always allowed him to, even though he had not been confirmed. But, of course, it is only in very rare cases ; something like that.

Q. Why do you call Holy Communion "The Blessed Sacrament" ?

A. Because the Holy Communion is Jesus Himself. He is as near to us in that Sacrament as He was to the Apostles when He was on earth, as near to us as He will be on the Day of Judgement. We cannot see Him as His Apostles saw Him when He was in the flesh, nor as we shall see Him on the Judgement Day, when we shall be in the Spirit, but He is present there all the same, hidden under the forms of Bread and Wine, and we see Him only by faith.

Q. Is He present in the Bread and Wine ?

A. Yes. I cannot tell you *how*, nor can I explain it at all. I don't think Jesus meant us to know or He would have explained it Himself. It is a Mystery. The Prayer Book speaks of it as a Mystery.

Q. What is a mystery ?

A. Something strange and secret which you cannot understand.

Q. And can't you understand this ?

A. By faith you can, but in no other way. You always know, though, that Jesus is present in that Sacrament, and that when you receive It you receive Him, if you have gone to that service prepared to meet Him.

Q. How do you know ?

A. Just as the blind man did in the Gospel story. He had been blind ever since he was born, and one day he met Jesus, and Jesus healed him. The Pharisees and rulers asked him a lot of questions about it : how it was done, why it was done, what sort of a man Jesus was, and so on. The man eventually became vexed at their questions and said : " One thing I know, once I was blind, now I see." It is the same with us, we don't know *how* our Lord comes to be present under the forms of Bread and Wine in the Holy Communion, but we do know that He *is* there because we have seen Him. Sometimes we don't see Him, but that is our fault not His. He is there all the same.

Q. Then why don't we see Him ?

A. Because we haven't tried to.

Q. If we try shall we always see Him there ?

A. Yes, but we must try in the right way.

Q. What is the right way ?

A. To prepare yourself and conduct yourself just as you would if you were going into the presence of the king, only even more so because Jesus is King of kings. You ought always to prepare yourself like that, but when you go to *receive* the Blessed Sacrament you must do even more than that.

Q. But haven't I to receive the Blessed Sacrament each time I go to the Communion Service ?

A. Oh, no. You should go to the Communion Service every Sunday, whether you receive the Blessed Sacrament or not.

Q. Why?

A. Because Jesus is there at that service. Because that is the one service He ordered. Because in that service we re-present before God our Blessed Lord, the one Sacrifice once offered, and ask God for His sake to forgive us, as He said He would. But we can do this without receiving the Sacrament. We ought to be very, very careful before we dare receive.

Q. What ought we to do?

A. Well, your Prayer Book tells you. It is a dreadful thing to receive the Sacrament unworthily. So first you have to very carefully examine yourself by the rule of God's commandments to see what you have done wrong. Then you must kneel down and tell God what you have done, tell Him how sorry you are, ask Him to forgive you, and help you to grow better. When you have done this, and when you know that God has forgiven you, then you can come, but not until then. You must never, never under any circumstances come to receive the Holy Communion until you have confessed your sins to God and have had them forgiven. The slate must be clean, all the sins wiped away.

Q. And must I do this every time?

A. Every time. You must never receive the Sacrament otherwise.

Q. Then one has to be very good to be able to receive Holy Communion?

A. No. One has to know that one is very *bad*. That is the main thing. It is when I have found out how bad I am that I am ready to come. I can never be good enough, I know that. But I can be bad enough and be sorry enough—that is when God

wants me. That is when I am ready to receive Him.

Q. How do I know that God will forgive me ?

A. Because He says so. No matter what you have done, or how often you have done it, God will forgive you. But if you want to be sure go to your priest, and he will pronounce God's forgiveness.

Q. Can a priest forgive sins ?

A. No, he can't forgive them himself, but he can forgive them for God. He can absolve you because our Lord gave him the power. He said, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them."

Q. And do many people go to a priest to have their sins forgiven ?

A. Very many. They always have, ever since our Lord left this world.

Q. And do you have to tell all your sins to a priest before you can be forgiven, just as you do to God ?

A. You don't tell them to the priest: you tell them to God. But, of course, the priest hears what you tell ; he is there to help you.

Q. But it is rather awful to have to tell before a priest ?

A. Well ; it isn't pleasant, naturally.

Q. And isn't the priest very shocked ?

A. No ; because he is always hearing confessions just as bad as yours, and, besides, he has to go to confession himself. He knows what sins trouble people most, and he is there to help. But you must forget that he is there at all. You must only think of God ; it is God Whom you are telling.

Q. But does the priest never tell any one else what he has heard?

A. Never! I don't think he could even if he wanted to. But no priest has ever told, not in all these many hundreds of years. You need never have any fear of that.

Q. Then is it a good thing to go to a priest to confess?

A. For most people, yes. You see, it is only like going to a doctor when you are ill. The priest is there to help to heal your soul. Most people are ill sometimes and need a doctor. So also they need a priest. But, of course, you are not compelled to go to a priest; you can please yourself. If you can satisfy your conscience without going, then don't go. But you *must* satisfy your conscience.

Q. Is the Holy Communion the most solemn service of all?

A. Of course. That is why everything about the altar, and everything which has to do with the service, is as good and as beautiful as we can afford to make it. It is all because we believe in the real Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion that we make the altar and the service as beautiful as possible.

Q. So our Lord is really there?

A. Really there.

Q. But how can He be really there if we can't see Him?

A. There are many things that are real which you can't see, very important things too—air, for instance, and heat—but they are there all the same. You can't see them, but you can feel them. It is the

same with our Lord. I can only see Him there by faith, but I know He is there because I can feel Him; just as I know the air is there because I can breathe it, and just as I know the heat is there because I am warm.

Q. And do I really eat His Body and drink His Blood?

A. Yes, really; in a heavenly and spiritual manner. It is, of course, a spiritual Presence of our Lord, but it is real—"verily and indeed," as the Prayer Book says. In the next world even He will not be more real than He is in this service. We shall know Him better, and we shall see Him as He is, but He won't be any nearer to us.

Q. What is the next world?

A. The world into which we go when we leave this. It is the world of spirits.

Q. Does everybody go there?

A. Yes; everybody goes there.

Q. Is that heaven?

A. Well, heaven is there; but we don't go to heaven straight away. You see, we have to be prepared for heaven. However good we are we are not ready for heaven. Our Lord, Who, of course, was good enough, did not go straight to heaven when He died.

Q. Where did He go to?

A. He went to Paradise. He told the poor thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He didn't say, "This day shalt thou be with Me in heaven," because He knew He wasn't going to heaven. He didn't go to heaven till forty days after His Resurrection.

Q. Then isn't Paradise the same as heaven?

A. No. The word paradise means a "park." A park is that which surrounds the mansion; but, of course, it is not the same as the mansion. You have to go through the park before you can get to the mansion. So before you can go to heaven, where our Lord told us there are many mansions, you must first go through the park of Paradise.

Q. Is that where our Lord went?

A. Yes. St. Peter tells us that He went there to preach to the spirits in prison—that is, the people who had died before He came into the world—to tell them the news and give them the same chance as everybody else. In our Creed it says, "He descended into hell," but the word really is "Hades," the place where the spirits of the departed are.

Q. What happens to us in Paradise?

A. No one knows; except that we learn to understand God better, and learn to look forward more and more to the joys of heaven, and to long to be there with God. And then, of course, we realize there our sins which we committed on earth, and how dreadful they were. I suppose we shall all of us be very sorry often in Paradise. But we shall be very glad, too, because we shall meet all our friends who went there before us, and we shall see everything differently.

Q. Shall we know all our friends?

A. Yes, we shall know them. The Apostles knew Moses and Elijah when our Lord was transfigured, although they had never seen them before; and the rich man knew both Abraham and Lazarus.

Q. Won't it seem a long time to our friends before we come?

A. No. There is no time or space in Paradise. A thousand years is but as yesterday. It won't seem long to them before we are all together again. It seems long to us here, but not to them. There is no time there.

Q. And what are they doing in Paradise?

A. Well, I hope among other things they are praying for us and helping us. You see, they know so much more and understand so much more. You remember how anxious the rich man was to help his brothers. He couldn't go to them, nor could Lazarus go; but I am sure he prayed for them. I should; so would you.

Q. And ought we to pray for our friends who have gone?

A. Of course. Why not? You prayed for them when they were alive on earth, didn't you? Why did you pray for them?

Q. Because I loved them and wanted to help them if I could.

A. But don't you love them much more now? And don't you want to do anything you can to help them much more now? Of course you must pray for them. The Church has always prayed for them.

Q. And you think it will help them?

A. Yes. It cannot harm them anyhow, and it will certainly help you.

Q. How will it help me ?

A. It will remind you that the society, the kingdom of God, the Church, isn't composed only of those who are living here on earth, but of those who are now in Paradise, and of those who are with Jesus in heaven. There are three parts of the Church.

Q. Which are they ?

A. The Church Militant ; the Church Expectant ; and the Church Triumphant.

Q. Which is the Church Militant ?

A. The Church Militant is here on earth. You and I at present belong to it. It is a very small part of the Church.

Q. Which is the Church Expectant ?

A. The Church Expectant is in Paradise. It is the biggest part. All those who have died in the Faith of Jesus and are preparing for heaven are the Church Expectant. Expectant means looking forward. They are not in heaven yet, but are looking forward with great longing to be in heaven.

Q. And what is the Church Triumphant ?

A. Those who are in heaven now. The Holy Trinity, the archangels and angels, and all those saints and holy ones whom God the Father has called to Himself. The complete triumph will be when the great final Day of Judgement has passed, and when we all are united in the grandeur and the glory of God in heaven.

Q. What is the Day of Judgement?

A. The day when our Lord will return from heaven to this earth. All the bodies of the dead will be raised; that is to say that the souls in the Intermediate State and also those who are still alive on earth when our Lord comes will receive their spiritual bodies.

Q. Then in the Intermediate State have we no bodies?

A. No. Only our souls are there. At the great resurrection our souls are reunited to our bodies. Not the mortal bodies which were laid in the ground, or buried at sea, or cremated, or otherwise destroyed, but new bodies, beautiful, glorious, spiritual, and everlasting. Then will be the Day of Judgement.

Q. What will happen?

A. Jesus, our Lord, will judge us by the deeds of this life. He will be seated on His throne, and before the throne will be gathered all nations. Those who have had all their sins forgiven and blotted out will go to live with Jesus and the heavenly host in heaven. Those who have, in spite of everything, chosen the evil way, and have finally rejected Him, will go to hell, the place of torment.

Q. Will there be many who finally reject Him?

A. I hope not; I think not. I hope there will be very few.

Q. And what will heaven be like?

A. No one knows except that it will be very beautiful—all happiness, all joy, all love. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." We shall be with God for ever. That is everything.

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